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ABSTRACT

This report describes a survey which was conducted to determine community junior college presidents' views of how to evaluate remedial programs. Questionnaires were mailed to 166 schools in the New England and Middle Atlantic States. Since no institution forwarded a copy of any formal evaluation guidelines, it is suggested that very few of the community college sample have any formal evaluation of remedial education courses or programs. It was found that the faculty was involved in program evaluation in more than half the community colleges responding and the academic dean in slightly less than half. The questions and responses are included in the report. (SW)

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Community College Presidents' View

# EVALUATION OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

JC 740 119

A Survey Report by

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# EVALUATION OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

## Foreword

This is a report of a survey prepared for the graduate student Seminar in Community Junior Colleges at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Seminar was conducted in the Fall term by Professor Michael Brick and in the Spring term by Professor Walter E. Sindlinger. The study was made under the auspices of the Teachers College Community College Center.

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# EVALUATION OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

## Introduction

A questionnaire was mailed to presidents of 166 Community Junior Colleges in the New England and Middle Atlantic States, the area served by the Community College Center of Teachers College, Columbia University. The single mailing was on November 20,1973 and the last tabulated return was received on March 21,1974, with no follow-up.

Of the 166 questionnaires distributed four were returned because of school closings. A total of 82 of the 162 received at the office of a community college president were filled out and returned, for a response of 51%. Eight of the 82 respondents reported that no remedial programs were offered at their institutions, leaving 74 usable responses.

The questions were composed to allow respondents to indicate views as to how to conduct evaluation, even where no evaluation was taking place currently. The questionnaire included both alternate choice and comment questions. In alternate choice questions respondents could mark more than one of the options.

Despite a request for a copy of any guidelines setting standards or procedures of evaluation, no institution returned such a document or memorandum.

## Discussion

In this study a broad definition of remedial programs was employed, viz. any program designed to prepare students for "regular" courses. No attempt was made to differentiate between remedial programs conducted under different names such as "basic skills" or "developmental". Also no effort was made to distinguish between remedial programs conducted by a department especially established for the purpose and those conducted by the English or Math department.

Based on the failure of any institution to forward a copy of any formal evaluation guidelines and the scattered responses to Question 1 ("Who does the evaluating at your Community College?"), one might conclude that very few of these community colleges have any formal evaluation of remedial education courses or programs.

Despite the recognized advantages of using outside evaluators, only four institutions reported using them. Also,in only one our of six community colleges responding does the director of research have any role in the evaluation of the remedial programs. It is significant that the faculty in the remedial programs are involved in the evaluation of these programs in more than half the community colleges responding and the academic dean in slightly less than half.

Pre-test and post-test scores and grades in remedial programs were marked most frequently as quantitative

evaluation proecures that should be used. This may indicate that "success for a student" may be more closely tied to the "ability to enroll in regular programs" than the responses indicated,although "significant growth in basic skills" was checked more frequently.

In contrast with the objective measures used in quantitative evaluation, most of the qualitative measures were subjective, based on judgments of the teacher and of the individual student. Affective development rated less concern than academic development.

Respondents, for the most part, exhibited great concern for the self-image and academic development of high risk students. However, there was apparent a groping for goals in many of the comments made in response to the last question ( "What evaluation criteria and procedures are currently being used in your Community College?").

Questions raised by the respondents suggested a number of areas for further study. Unanswered questions include the following:

1. What does evaluation mean as applied to remedial programs?

2. What should be evaluated?

3. How can evaluation be made less threatening?

4. How can the results of evaluation be used to strengthen on-going programs?

5. How can evaluation be built into existing or new programs?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR REMEDIAL

EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1. Who does the evaluating of your Community College remedial education programs?

| % of response | Number of responses | |
|---|---|---|
| 56% | 41 | Faculty teaching in remedial program |
| 49% | 36 | Academic Dean |
| 40% | 29 | English and Math Department Chairman |
| 40% | 29 | Students in remedial program |
| 34% | 25 | Chairman of remedial department |
| 23% | 17 | No formal evaluation procedure |
| 22% | 16 | Other - Division Chairman; Director of Developmental Studies; Program Director |
| 16% | 12 | Director of Research |
| 11% | 8 | Other faculty |
| 5% | 4 | Outside evaluators |

2. What evaluation procedures should be used?

Quantitative Measures

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 84% | 61 | Pre-test and post-test scores |
| 75% | 55 | Grades later in regular courses |
| 55% | 40 | Student drop-out percentage |
| 41% | 30 | Grades in remedial program |
| 41% | 30 | Percent transfer to regular programs |
| 41% | 30 | Percent who earn AA or AS degree |
| 16% | 12 | Other - Percent gainfully employed; Post remediation success in school; Transfer to other institutions; Percent who sense success; On job ratings. |

Question #2 continued-

Qualitative Measures

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 70% | 51 | Faculty judgment of affective development |
| 67% | 49 | Student self appraisal |
| 47% | 34 | Use of standardized tests of behavior, motivation and self-concept |
| 37% | 27 | Judgment of counseling staff |
| 23% | 17 | Class group appraisal |
| 7% | 5 | Other - Tennessee Self Concept Test; Success in school or on job; Teaching staff; Tutors |

3. What constitutes success for a student in your remedial education program?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 79% | 58 | Significant growth of basic skills |
| 55% | 40 | Ability to enroll in regular programs |
| 47% | 34 | Significant affective development |
| 11% | 8 | Other - Success in careers and goals; Skills in making decisions; GPA; Pursue new goal |

4. What measures should be employed to build up self-image of students in remedial programs?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 86% | 63 | Counseling and built in success ranked most frequently. Others were good teachers, personal contact with faculty, group learning, give credit, no punitive grading, and skill development. |

5. What weight should be given to comparative cost data in evaluation of the effectiveness of remedial education programs?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 82% | 60 | Cost of remedial education programs is generally greater but no weight pattern or trend could be ascertained. |

6. What evaluation criteria and procedures are currently being used in your Community College?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 92% | 67 | Academic achievement, pass remedial course, standardized tests, pre - test and post - test scores, drop out rate, faculty evaluation of students, student evaluation of faculty, student self evaluation, exit interviews, counseling reports. |

PLEASE ENCLOSE A COPY OF THE EVALUATION GUIDELINES OR ANY MEMORANDUM OF CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES USED AT YOUR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0% | 0 | None were received. |

Thank you.

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